



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Brian Gorman
206-526-6613

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 31, 2007

NOAA Fisheries Service Announces Actions to Mitigate Effects of Hydropower System, Recover Salmon Stocks

Product of two-year collaboration with states and tribes

NOAA Fisheries Service today announced a series of actions to protect and recover salmon stocks by mitigating the effects of the Columbia Basin hydropower system and Upper Snake River irrigation projects.

The actions, detailed in two draft biological opinions (BiOps), spell out an aggressive and comprehensive series of hydropower system improvements, hatchery reforms and habitat enhancements. The BiOps reflect hundreds of millions of dollars of research over more than a decade to affirm that the actions will not only prevent harm to threatened and endangered salmon, but will ultimately move the species towards recovery.

"There is no single cause for salmon population declines and there will be no single solution," said Bob Lohn, regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries in Seattle. "The only course of action is a comprehensive plan coordinated with state, local and tribal partners. These BiOps lay the foundation for restoration."

The biological opinions, which analyze a comprehensive proposal presented in August by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration and Bureau of Reclamation, contain more than 70 specific actions. They respond to direction from Judge James Redden of the U.S. Ninth District Court in Oregon that federal actions in the hydropower system should assure survival and provide for recovery of threatened and endangered fish stocks through a collaborative effort among states and tribes.

An unprecedented collaboration of the Northwest states, affected Indian tribes, and federal agencies helped to identify recovery needs and select appropriate solutions. The collaboration group worked exhaustively to resolve issues, holding more than 300 technical and policy meetings in the course of the last two years. "This process taught us that the commitment and resolution for salmon recovery have not diminished," added Lohn.

The BiOps are based on a much broader, more comprehensive and more rigorous method of analyzing salmon-population changes than has ever been attempted before. NOAA Fisheries analyzed a wide variety of measurements and factors for each individual salmon population. Measurements included a species' current abundance trends, its likelihood to rebound from low population levels, and the geographical distribution of the population. The result is an analysis far more detailed and tailored to individual fish populations than has been used ever before.

"Through this process, our understanding of the salmon lifecycle has increased dramatically," said Lohn. "This rigorous scientific review provides us with a great degree of certainty that these actions will lead to salmon recovery."

-more-

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

- NOAA -

Note to editors: Contacts at the other federal agencies are:

Scott Simms, Bonneville Power Administration, 503-230-3520

Diana Cross, Bureau of Reclamation, 208-378-5020

Michael Coffey, Army Corps of Engineers, 503-808-3722